W5YI

National Volunteer Examiner Coordinator

REPORT

Up to the minute news from the world of amateur radio, personal computing and emerging electronics. While no guarantee is made, information is from sources we believe to be reliable. May be reproduced providing credit is given to The W5YI Report.

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★ *In This Issue* ★

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FCC SAYS 'YES' TO NO-CODE

Communicator is Out - Code-Free Technician is In!

"The steps that we have taken...hold the potential of providing an even more vital, more dynamic service."
FCC Chairman Alfred Sikes

Instead of enacting its controversial proposal for a Communicator license, the FCC on Dec. 13 removed the 5 WPM Morse code requirement from the existing Technician Class amateur operator license. Praising Amateur Radio for its achievements, the five Commissioners voted unanimously for the change. Implementation of the new rules is expected by February 1991.

At the same time, the FCC voted to change *§Part 97* to include the procedures for exempting handicapped Novice and Technician hams from the 13 and 20 WPM Morse tests required for upgrading to higher license classes. The 5 WPM Morse test will continue to be required of all amateurs who desire HF operation.

Current holders of Technician licenses will be 'grandfathered,' meaning that they will keep all of their current privileges (including HF privileges). After the new rules go into effect, new Technician licensees will receive all amateur privileges above 30 MHz. They may optionally pass a 5 words-per-minute Morse test to obtain the same privileges below 30 MHz enjoyed by Novices and current Technicians.

Technician licensees who pass the 5 WPM test will not receive any new callsign, nor will they have to use a suffix or other special station ID. The new rules will not prescribe an official name for Technicians who have HF privileges. However, FCC staff told us they expect the name "Technician Plus" to be widely used in place of "Technician Plus 5 WPM Morse Code". This is also the name suggested by the No-Code Committee convened by the ARRL to consider a possible code-free amateur license class.

The Technician exam will consist of 55 questions from the current Novice and Technician elements, and will not include 5 proposed special questions about Morse code's "...utility and tradition". These two examinations may be taken together or one at a time.

The Commission decided to retain the Novice license in order to provide an alternative entry-level opportunity to those who can pass a 5 WPM telegraphy requirement in place of the more comprehensive written exam for the Technician. The Novice examination will continue to be available under the current system. Despite serious

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problems with fraudulent examinations, the Commission decided not to integrate Novice testing into the three examiner VEC Examining program at this time. There is thus no change whatsoever in the current Novice testing program.

The full text of the FCC's decision was not available at presstime. The following is the FCC presentation and news conference in Washington:

(Ralph Haller, Chief, FCC Private Radio Bureau:) "Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Commissioners. The Amateur Radio Service has a long history of pioneering advancements in the radio art. I thought you might like to see what the state of the art is right now in the Amateur Radio Service. Through various networks that have been put together by the voluntary time and personal funds of radio hobbyists, it's possible to communicate around the world with a small radio (displays a small hand-held rig).

"We believe that the items before you will encourage growth in the amateur service. Three people deserve special credit. They reviewed over 1,100 comments in response to the two notices. I'd like to recognize John Johnston, Monty DePont, and Bill Cross, who will now present the items."

(William Cross:) "Modern consumer, commercial and military electronics systems require engineers to design them, technicians to install and maintain them, and a technologically literate citizenry to use them. Many of our engineers, scientists, astronauts, educators and technicians took their first steps toward their careers when they became amateur operators. We look to the amateur service to expand our country's resource of technicians and electronics experts.

"The advent of radio at the turn of the century brought the beginning of amateur radio. Eighty-nine years ago yesterday, at St. John's, Newfoundland, inventor and experimenter Guglielmo Marconi received the first message transmitted across the Atlantic Ocean by radio. The message consisted of three dots, Morse code for the letter 'S'.

"At that time, telegraphy was the only radio technology, whether amateur, commercial or military. Telegraphy has remained an unbroken tradition in the amateur service. Every amateur operator ever licensed in this country has passed a Morse code test.

"Lately however, there is concern within the amateur community that the current Morse code requirement is discouraging persons who could help the service more fully meet its purpose from participating in amateur radio. Now, as in the early 1900s, the amateur service is for technically inclined private citizens worldwide who engage in self-training, information exchange and radio experimentation. It is for persons who are fascinated by radio, and who enjoy a personal satisfaction in understanding and using the technology.

"Society benefits from the experimental nature of this service. The concept of broadcasting, for instance, began when listeners overheard amateur stations exchanging weather reports and baseball scores. The first land mobile systems were built by amateurs (as were) the first hand-held radios. The first satellite system authorized by the Commission was an amateur station. Today, more than 30 amateur satellites have been launched. Amateur operators aboard the Space Shuttles communicate to other amateurs around the world. Amateurs pioneered communications by Low-Earth orbiting satellites, a technology just now being explored commercially.

"This service discovered the forefront of communications technology. Single sideband, a narrowband voice emission, was adopted by our Air Force only after its capability was proven in the amateur service. Amateur operators moreover have always been at the cutting edge of digital communications technology.

"Society is well served by having amateur operators, with their transmitting apparatus, available in practically every area of the world. When a disaster strikes, such that normal communication systems are overloaded, damaged or completely disrupted, amateur systems assist relief operations immediately. Often, it is from an amateur operator on the scene that the outside world first

"I am a currently licensed Extra Class amateur radio operator and wish to be a volunteer examiner. Have ... my ... tion under "The W5YI Report" Program? If so, please send a copy of ... operator license revoked or suspended. I do not own a signific

learns of a disaster and of the assistance that is needed. In a situation like this, nothing can surpass having persons there who are ready, willing and most importantly, able to communicate. They temporarily bridge the gap until normal communications are restored.

"The amateur service should continue to attract technically-inclined persons, especially our young people, and encourage them to prepare themselves in the areas where the United States needs experts. The items before you, therefore, expand the access to the amateur service by amending the telegraphy requirements for amateur operator licenses.

"The first item, a *Report and Order* in *PR Docket 90-356,* exempts from the higher-speed code exams persons who, because of severe handicap, are incapable of passing those examinations. We would rely on a physician's certification of disability to determine eligibility of an applicant.

"The second item, a *Report and Order* in *Docket 90-55,* establishes a codeless amateur operator license class by eliminating the code requirement from the Technician Class operator license. These amendments will make it easier for today's technically-inclined persons to become involved in the world of radio communications. This, in turn, will help our country stay in the forefront of research and development. For these reasons, we recommend that these Reports and Orders be adopted. Thank you."

(Commissioner James Quello:) "The amateur service is self-regulating, self-disciplined, and it compares to some of the other services most favorably. I think this opens it up to one, the handicapped; and two, the young. And I know the same type of self-regulation will continue. I don't know how important code is today. Is it being used less and less?"

(Ralph Haller:) " Actually Commissioner, there is still a fair amount of Morse code that is used by amateurs. But with the interest in computers it is probably being used less today, particularly by the people just now entering the service."

(Quello:) "Well, I think it's good to open it up to those who may not be able to master the code. Most of it is done by voice today anyway. Excellent items; I approve them both."

(Commissioner Sherrie Marshall:) "The amateur service has provided numerous contributions. This should open it up to attract more operators to the service while also preserving the traditional entry route for those who know Morse code. I also think it's appropriate for handicapped amateurs to take an even greater role in the service, and that's why these two items deserve our support."

(Commissioner Andrew Barrett:) "Mr. Chairman, I share what Commissioners Quello and Marshall said. They're both good items, and certainly the one for handicapped is something we should have been doing some time ago, and you're to be complimented."

(Commissioner Ervin Duggan:) "Mr. Chairman, I also support these items. Mr. Cross, I'm impressed by all the insights you gave in your presentation, the reasons we should appreciate the amateur service in its relationship to commercial services like the new low-Earth orbit satellites. I was fascinated to hear those connections made. I think you deepen our appreciation of the amateur service.

"One comment about the handicapped item. There was some fear in my office when this whole process began that we might be leaning over too far backwards to relax our standards and that in the process of trying to seem compassionate and responsive to the special needs of handicapped people, that we would in fact go too far and rob handicapped people of the pride they might otherwise have at being able to meet tough standards.

"I think in the process of receiving comments and reviewing this item, you have succeeded in removing that concern. I'm impressed by the large number of comments that came in. It speaks of the vitality and the tremendous interest on the part of people who are involved in this activity. I know that it imposed some real

burdens on you, but you've done a good job and I'm happy to support these items, Mr. Chairman."

(Chairman Al Sikes:) "I think that the team has done an excellent job, you've weighed carefully and come forward with a very balanced approach. This is clearly a vital service. The contributions in the service area, the equipment area, the emergency areas by amateurs have really been extraordinary. I would agree with Commissioner Duggan. Your report was helpful; it gave me some additional insights. I think that the steps that we have taken to broaden this now and invite more into it hold the potential of providing an even more vital, more dynamic service."

Press conference held

At the press conference following the meeting, PRB chief Ralph Haller explained that to determine who may certify handicaps, the FCC would use the *American Medical Association's* definition of "physician". Only health professionals with full medical privileges, that is, doctors of osteopathy (D.O.) or doctors of medicine (M.D.) would be permitted to attest that an amateur has a handicap severe enough to prevent passage of a 13 or 20 WPM code exam. This part of the FCC's decision is not likely to be welcomed by other practitioners who may be competent to certify certain disabilities ...but who are not D.O.s or M.D.s.

"We will put out a guide of some type to explain to the physicians what's required in taking the Morse code test and this should be of some help in making that determination," he said. The FCC may redesign the Form 610 amateur license application to contain the doctor's certification, or it may rely on a separate sheet. In either case, the *Title 18* warning against misrepresentation will apply. [*U.S. Code Title 18, Section 1001* provides for fines and imprisonment when willful, false statements are made on government forms.]

Asked if the handicapped waiver system will be immune to abuses, Haller replied "I don't think that any Commission process is completely free of abuse. ...We have chosen to rely on certifications of people who have been certified in the medical profession, who are relied upon in many other areas to certify disabilities. For example, whether you are entitled to have a disability license tag on your car to park in the disabled spaces. We rely upon the integrity of those trained people. If there are abuses, and they come to our attention, we would fully anticipate enforcement action both against the applicant and against the physician."

Will dropping the Morse requirement from Technician bring poor-quality CB-type operators into Amateur Radio? "Morse code doesn't indicate what kind of operator you're going to be. It proves that you can send and receive Morse code," Haller said. "We are still retaining a written test. There is a license that can be lost for willful violation of the rules. There is something of value in that license. In the Citizens Band service today there is not even a license. So we don't consider this in any way to be even close to a CB service. You have to work to get the license even though you don't have to pass Morse code."

Technicians who pass the 5 WPM test will receive the *Certificate of Successful Completion of Examination* by the Volunteer Examination Coordinator. This CSCE will be permanently valid, but there is otherwise no change in use of a CSCE to take exams. The VECs will also provide the FCC with a list of those who possess the CSCE.

With respect to whether administering volunteer examiners (VE's) should administer [13 and 20 WPM handicapped exempted telegraphy] examinations that they have not themselves passed, the FCC said that "Any VE who is not competent to perform the VE function should not administer examinations."

Will no-code forestall stagnation in Amateur Radio? "The amateur service is not growing to the extent it probably should, based on all that it has to offer," Haller said. "One of the reasons we think that providing a non-code entry will be helpful is that it will get people, particularly young people who have a primary interest in digital communications and computers, interested in this service. Many times this is where the technical expertise comes from in this country. People become interested in amateur radio at a

young age and become some of our brightest scientists and engineers.

"So we really do think that this is a step that is necessary, a step that will help the United States be competitive in international markets."

Implementation of new examination rules

All volunteer examiner coordinators have received a letter dated December 14th from the FCC's Personal Radio Branch providing preliminary instructions on handling handicapped applications and examination credit. We quote from that letter:

"Handicapped examinees. To implement the rules adopted on December 13, 1990, please instruct your administering VEs to implement the following procedure beginning in about two months. [It is anticipated that the effective date of the new rules will be mid-February.]

"Examination credit: The administering VEs must give examination Element 1(C) [20 words-per-minute] credit to an examinee holding a current or expired but within the grace period for renewal) operator license, including:

- Novice
- Technician plus CSCE for passing element 1(A) [5 WPM] or 1(B) [13 WPM].
- Technician issued before effective date of *Report and Order* (R&O),
- General, or
- Advanced Class operator license;

AND submitting a *Form 610* with the following attachments:

- A physician's certification stating that because the person is an individual with a severe handicap, the person is unable to pass a 13 or 20 words per minute telegraphy examination, and
- A release signed by the examinee permitting disclosure to the FCC of medical information pertaining to the examinee's handicap.

"Attaching the above information to the current *Form 610* Amateur Radio application is a temporary measure until such time as a revised *Form 610* is available. The administering VE's mark on the *Form 610* in Item D of their report, under EXAMINATION ELEMENT 1(C), the letter "H".

"For the purpose of the above, a physician is a person who is licensed to practice in a place where the amateur service is regulated by the FCC, as either a Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) of a Doctor of Osteopathy (D.O.).

"Codeless Technician: In general, the answer to practically every question about how the VEC system will be affected by the codeless Technician is 'No change over present procedures.'

"Technician Plus: We need your input on how you can periodically provide us with the names and call signs of codeless Technician Class licensees who pass a telegraphy examination. We will not have the capability to incorporate this information into our licensee data base in the foreseeable future. Ideally, we would like you to maintain and supply to us and to others a complete masterfile containing the information in paper or magnetic form." [End quote.]

There has been much informal discussion among the VEC's concerning any necessary examination questions that must be revised or added, administrative handling of a "Technician Plus" database that would be made available to the FCC and the fact that their will now be four different levels of Technician class operators. Nothing has been decided at this point ...primarily because the final FCC Report and Order has not been issued which will contain the new Part 97 Rules.

It does appear, however, that there is agreement that one "Tech Plus" database should be maintained under the auspices of the National Conference of VECs. It would be unmanageable for the FCC to receive separate lists submitted by eighteen different VECs. ***Joe T. Ingram, Jr./K4OOV,*** conference chairman, has agreed to establish a preliminary central database until the matter can be further discussed and a permanent system adopted at the next conference meeting scheduled for June 1991.

It appears that this database will contain three types of new Technician Plus operators.
(1.) Current Novice licensees who upgrade by

passing Element 3(A), the written element required for the Technician class,

(2.) Applicants who successfully pass the 5 WPM (Element 1A) telegraphy requirement at the same time they pass Element 2 and 3(A) and;

(3.) No-code technicians who later pass element 1(A) which must be accomplished at a (3 examiner) VEC coordinated test session.

An absolute minimum of test questions will have to be revised - probably less than five. No new questions are being required by the FCC to be added and the VEC's Question Pool Committee (QPC) will probably not add any further questions concerning handicapped and No-code examinations until the next routine review of Element 2 and 3(A).

The four levels of Technician class operators that will be in existence after the R&O will be:

- **Grandfathered Technician** - A Technician issued before March 21, 1987. They receive credit for Elements 1(A), 2, 3(A) and 3(B).
- **Current Technician** - issued between March 21, 1987, and the effective date of the codeless Technician license. Credit: Elements 1(A), 2 and 3(A).
- **Codeless Technician** - issued on or after effective date of R&O. Credit: Elements 2 and 3(A).
- **No-Code Technician Plus** CSCE for Element 1(A) 5 WPM, 1(B) 13 WPM, or 1(C) 20 WPM telegraphy - Also a Novice who upgrades by passing 5 WPM code and an applicant that passes 5 WPM plus 2 and 3(A) at one sitting.

It will be the applicant's responsibility to submit evidence as to which Technician level he/she qualifies for. This will normally be accomplished by the *Certificate of Successful Completion of Examination (CSCE)* issued at a VEC System test session or by the date appearing on their operator license.

The VEC's (and FCC) are also looking for informal titles to the four Technician levels. Suggested are **Grand Tech** (or Grandaddy Tech, Grandpappy Tech, or Grandpa Tech), **Classic Tech, Tech Lite** (or Codeless Tech,) and **Tech Plus.** Send your suggestions to us ...or to any VEC.

NOVEMBER VE PROGRAM STATISTICS

November	***1988***	***1989***	***1990***
No. VEC's	****18***	****18***	****18***
Testing Sessions	***320***	***482***	***596***
VEC	*1988*	*1989*	*1990*
ARRL	43.4%	42.7%	46.7%
W5YI	28.4	34.6	33.2
CAVEC	6.6	5.4	5.7
DeVRY	6.3	5.8	4.7
Others (14)	15.3	11.5	9.7
Year-to-Date Sessions	***4374***	***5022***	***5610***
Elements Administ.	***5492***	***7819***	***9675***
VEC	*1988*	*1989*	*1990*
ARRL	47.2%	45.1%	50.0%
W5YI	19.9	29.6	25.9
CAVEC	11.6	6.5	8.2
DeVRY	5.1	6.0	4.1
Others (14)	16.2	12.8	11.8
Year-to-Date Elements	***81438***	***88417***	***96433***
Applicants Tested	***3225***	***4469***	***5924***
VEC	*1988*	*1989*	*1990*
ARRL	46.3%	44.2%	50.9%
W5YI	21.4	29.1	26.7
DeVRY	10.3	7.4	6.7
CAVEC	5.1	5.7	4.3
Others (14)	16.9	13.6	11.4
Year-to-Date Tested	***48715***	***52734***	***58972***

November	***1988***	***1989***	***1990***
Pass Rate - All	60.6%	60.1%	59.8%
Upgrade Rate - W5YI	55.0	55.4	53.5
Applicants/Session	10.1	9.3	9.9
Appl./Session W5YI	7.1	7.3	7.1
Elements/Applicant	1.7	1.8	1.6
Sessions Per VEC	19.8	26.8	33.1

Administrative Errors by VE's/VEC's			
November	***1988***	***1989***	***1990***
Defect. Applications	0.8%	0.5%	0.3%
Late Filed Sessions	0.9%	1.0%	0.0%
Defective Reports	2.8%	1.5%	0.5%

Note: The FCC previously considered ARRL, W5YI and DeVry to be 13 VEC's each since VEC's initially were appointed on a regional basis. Since any VEC may now coordinate examinations in any region, the FCC has reduced the number of VEC Regions (62) to VEC Organizations (18.) Nearly 80% of all amateur testing is coordinated by the ARRL and W5YI-VEC groups.

[Source: Personal Radio Branch/FCC; Washington, D.C.]

■ It was the *Quarter Century Wireless Assoc.* that suggested simply eliminating the code from the Technician Class to arrive at a 30-MHz and higher frequency no-code ham ticket. QCWA made their proposal in their August 2nd, 1990, comments on Docket 90-55, the Code-free Communicator proceeding. *(See interview on page 9.)* They weren't the first to suggest eliminating the code from the Technician, however.

That distinction belongs to ***Dr. Michael C. Trahos, KB4PGC,*** a physician from Alexandria, Virginia. His May 1989 34-page proposal was one of the original twelve no-code petitions accepted by the Commission. Trahos asked for two new no-code license classes. He wanted the Novice and Technician Class names retained and renamed *Novice Plus* and *Technician Plus* ...for "Plus Code."

He envisioned new code-free Novices being required to only pass Element 2 (Novice written exam) to obtain current Novice privileges above 30 MHz. The code-free Technician passing Elements 2 and 3(A) would get six meter privileges ...and all ham spectrum above 220-MHz. He exempted the two meter band, but added he "...would entertain any additional proposals regarding ...expanding the new [no-code] Technician Class privileges to include the 2m band, 144-148 MHz ...based on comments received to this Petition." (RM-6990, page 21, paragraph 46)

Dr. Trahos wrote us "I view this FCC decision as a partial personal victory over the ARRL and their monopoly of Amateur Radio. It is, however, only a partial victory." He said it was still his personal opinion, supported by international experience, that a true no-code entry level license should only have written requirements less than or equal to that of the lowest obtainable code (Novice) class. He contends a code-free Technician class by itself will "...fail to substantially increase the influx of new persons into Amateur Radio. Time will tell if these observations are correct."
(Extracted from letter dated: 12/14/90)

■ Following two press releases were received from the ARRL:

FCC CREATES CODELESS CLASS OF AMATEUR RADIO LICENSE

For the first time ever, starting in February, it will be possible to obtain an Amateur Radio license in the United States without passing a Morse code test. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has eliminated the need for new Technician class Amateur Radio license applicants to demonstrate proficiency in Morse code in order to have all amateur privileges above 30 MHz. The implementation date may be as early as February 1991. Technicians who obtain their licenses prior to that date will be grandfathered, meaning their existing HF privileges will continue.

The codeless Technician written examination will have 55 questions. New Technicians wishing to gain access to the HF privileges below 30 MHz now enjoyed by Novices and Technicians will be required to pass a 5 WPM Morse code test before three Volunteer Examiners accredited by Volunteer Examiner Coordinators, and will be given a Certificate of Successful Completion of Examination (CSCE) to serve as evidence of their qualifications. There will be no call sign designator to indicate Technicians who have or have not passed a code test.

The FCC took this action in response to numerous petitions and public comments. By offering a codeless class of license with privileges exclusively above 30 MHz, an entry level license will become available to those who find the Morse code a barrier to becoming an amateur radio licensee. The FCC decided to retain the current Novice Class operator license as an alternate entry level license for those persons able to pass the 5 WPM Morse code test instead of the more comprehensive written exam required for the Technician Class license. No changes in Novice examinations or privileges were announced.

At a press briefing held just after the Commission's meeting, FCC Private Radio Bureau Chief Ralph Haller said, "The Amateur Service is not growing as it should relative to what it has to offer." He said that the Amateur Service is where our nation's technical expertise comes from--that the changes should attract people who are interested in computers and digital communications, and should help the U.S. to be more competitive. February 1991 QST will carry more details.
(ARRL press release dated: 12/13/90.)

ARRL APPLAUDS FCC RETENTION OF NOVICE LICENSE, SEEKS INPUT ON PRIVILEGES FOR CODELESS TECHNICIANS

Responding to the Federal Communications Commission action in PR Docket 90-55 creating a codeless class of Amateur Radio license, the President of the American Radio Relay League, ***Larry Price, W4RA,*** noted with pleasure that the Commission had decided to retain the Novice license as a means of entry into Amateur Radio and to adopt a codeless license with a meaningful written examination requirement. "Our members were very strong on both of these points, because they couldn't imagine how we could maintain the character of the Amateur Radio Service without them," Mr. Price

said. However, President Price sounded a note of caution with regard to the privileges the Commission plans to grant to codeless licensees. "The formula developed by the ARRL Board, which called for privileges above 220 MHz, was based on extensive membership input. It was carefully balanced to offer attractive privileges while protecting existing patterns of amateur activity." While it will take some time to gauge the reaction to the Commission's action, Mr. Price observed that the FCC formula is likely to be less acceptable to many amateurs than the League's. He asked that League members share their views with their elected Directors, who collectively determine League policy.

"Before we can decide whether to request that the Commission partially reconsider its action, we'll have to see the *Report and Order,*" said Mr. Price. Usually it takes the FCC several days to several weeks after a Commission action to release an item after editorial review. There is a 30-day window of opportunity following release in which petitions for reconsideration can be filed. Mr. Price noted that the ARRL Board was holding its regular meeting on January 18-19, 1991. "The timing looks good for a careful review of the Commission's action at that meeting," he said.
(ARRL press release dated: 12/14/90.)

■ The FCC will host a tutorial on the Amateur Satellite Service on January 11, 1991. The tutorial, presented by the ***Amateur Radio Satellite Corporation (AMSAT),*** will cover the history of amateur radio satellites, the amateur satellite service's capabilities and technical achievements, and the contributions the amateur service has made in education and public service.

The tutorial will be presented by AMSAT Pres. ***Doug Loughmiller, KO5I,*** and Vice Pres. Engineering ***Jan King, W3GEY.*** Messers. Loughmiller and King will discuss AMSAT's mission, capabilities, individual satellites and their mission, and ground stations. The tutorial will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon in the Commission Meeting Room, Room 856, 1919 M Street N.W., Washington, D.C. The public is invited.
(FCC press release dated: 12/21/90.)

■ The following was contained in a letter from the ***FCC's Personal Radio Branch*** to all VEC's: "A petition has been filed to add new paragraph (j) to Section 97.509 of the Commission's Rules: "(j) An examinee who fails an element may not be readministered the same element the same day or at the same examination session."

The petition states: "The practice of repeating any examination the same day at the same examination session is contrary to intelligent testing procedures... Although many VE teams will not permit a 'second try', there are many that permit the practice, some selectively perhaps to 'friends...' The consistent liberalization of the Amateur Service's licensing procedure appears to be degrading the service."

■ On Sept. 18, 1990, the FCC issued a *Show Cause Order* why the Amateur license of ***Michael D. Harrison, WB2PTI,*** should not be revoked. Harrison, you will remember, pleaded guilty to five counts of a 50 count indictment charging that he participated in a scheme during 1988 and 1989 to defraud ham operators.

He placed advertisements in several radio hobby publications offering the *Uniden 2510* ten meter mobile transceiver "...at an unheard of price." Harrison accepted orders and payments in excess of $100,000 in response to his ads, failed to ship the merchandise and kept the funds.

Harrison was sentenced to 21 months in prison, received a fine in the amount of $125,000 and was required to pay restitution in the amount of $100,073 to the victims of his crime - to be followed by a three year probationary period.

The FCC has now ruled that the fraudulent nature of his criminal conduct reveals a likelihood that he will not comply with its Rules. Harrison had asked for a hearing which was denied since the FCC's "...case is based on a conviction which is not in dispute."

Harrison's WB2PTI amateur station license was revoked on November 29, 1990, by Administrative Law Judge Richard L. Sippel.
(FCC Release dated: 12/11/90)

■ We received a note from ***Jay O'Brien, W6GO*** regarding the ***SAREX STS-35 mission.*** It seems there was no reported instances of harmful interference to any Packet-Clustering operations on 144.95 MHz. This is the frequency shared by both DX spotters and the *Shuttle Amateur Radio Experiment.* [See last issue.] DXers are now attempting to establish a dialog with the ARRL, AMSAT and SAREX which would result in a better sharing arrangement of 144.95 MHz before the next mission when ham astronaut ***Ken Cameron,*** pilot of the Atlantis space shuttle, will participate in SAREX-II. STS-37 is scheduled for an April 1991 lift-off.

■ We understand that radio controlled model aircraft users represented by the ***Academy of Model Aeronautics*** are overjoyed that they will now be able to fly their models on the six meter band without having to learn the Morse code to get a Technician class ham ticket. Expect to see a lot of R/C'ers turning up at VEC test sessions to take Element 2 and 3(A).

FCC ADOPTS QCWA NO-CODE PROPOSAL

The *Quarter Century Wireless Association* is an organization of nearly 11,000 ham operators - all of whom were first licensed 25 or more years ago. It is the nation's second largest amateur group. Only the ARRL has more members. The QCWA comments on a codeless class of amateur license were filed with the FCC on August 2, 1990.

They said "Many QCWA members have a lifetime history of operating with, and a sentimental attachment to, use of Morse code. It is understandable that they are not overly enthusiastic in endorsing changes in licensing procedures which would delete the requirement to demonstrate a degree of proficiency in this traditional mode of communication. Nevertheless, after consideration of the facts associated with licensing trends, we have concluded that the blanket code proficiency requirement may be a major cause of decline in entry of many people into the Amateur Radio Service. Given this decision and in recognition of our responsibility to the public interest, we are agreed that a blanket Morse code requirement for entry into the Amateur Radio Service can no longer be justified."

QCWA further said "We believe that the basic requirements can be met with only one major change in current procedures being necessary to implement a viable no-code entry program. That is, to remove the Morse code requirement in the present Technician class license and modify its privileges to restrict operation to assigned frequencies above 30 MHz to comply with international agreements. ...If [codeless Technicians] desire to operate on frequencies below 30 MHz they would be required to pass [an] appropriate Morse code examination...."

QCWA said they believed "That many who have found existing licensing procedures requiring knowledge of the Morse code burdensome will be attracted to the Amateur Radio Service. The modifications proposed are compatible with Commission requirements regarding ease of implementation and with minimal changes required to modify the Commission's existing computer-aided licensing procedures. The modifications suggested provide attractive incentives for new no-code licensees to the Amateur Radio Service and at the same time an entry license compatible with the traditions of the Amateur Radio Service is maintained. We believe that bringing licensing requirements in line with contemporary perceptions is in keeping with the requirement that the Amateur Radio Service operate in the public interest and, will result in increased numbers of persons, young and old alike, entering the Amateur Radio Service, gateway to becoming a part in the development of new scientific technologies and operating procedures that will be critical to the United States and the World in the 21st Century."

The document was signed by QCWA president ***Harry Dannals, W2HD.*** We decided to telephone him.

W5YI - Who came up with the QCWA no-code proposal?

W2HD - It was a drafting committee operation consisting of (QCWA Director and ex-ARRL staffer) ***Lew McCoy, W1ICP,*** (QCWA General Manager) ***Ted Heithecker, W5EJ,*** (attorney and ex-FCC Dallas Engineer-in-Charge) ***Gus Howard, W5KM*** and myself. The four of us did the majority of the writing; the original idea was almost the joint thinking of Lew and myself. We thought it was not necessary to create a new class of license. We already had the machinery there in the form of the Technician license.

W5YI - Was this agreed to by all of the directors?

W2HD - Yes. At the board meeting it was voted unanimously to file with those basic guidelines ...that the Novice should be retained ...that a codeless Technician should be proposed. We went ahead with that as our foundation. It was 100%. One of the board members got up and said "A codeless license ...its time has come." I think that was the kind of thing that spurred the board on to full acceptance. There were no dissenting votes.

W5YI - The QCWA position was very unexpected when you consider two things. Historically, old-timers cling to the past. Here is a case where they deviated. Also, you are the ex-president of the American Radio Relay League - and Lew McCoy was a long-time staffer at ARRL headquarters.

W2HD - I think the current leadership of the QCWA board recognizes the challenges of the future and that we are not meeting them the way we are going at the moment ...and that something like this was necessary. There was much discussion. It just wasn't an easy thing. I have been touring the various chapters talking to QCWA members and others and in most cases I was able to convince our people that a no-code license was an important thing for the future of amateur radio. I was president of the League for ten years ...from 1972 to 1982. While we turned down a codeless license during my tenure, I have letters in my file that show I was in favor of a no-code license even at that time ...even though the board's decision - which has to be the decision of the president - was carried through to the no-code vote that was very, very heavy as you recall by the amateur radio fraternity.

W5YI - Why do you think that the present ARRL

directors were not unified for no-code - nine to six is certainly not unanimous - and opposed to giving code-free amateurs VHF privileges on two meters?
W2HD - I was very disturbed by the latter point ...even more disturbed to see that there is a possibility of [filing for] reconsideration. It troubles me to think that 220-MHz and above is the mainstream of amateur radio. I would question the directors and some of the people that helped to make that decision. How many of them are ready now to talk to people on 220 and above if such a license and privileges were granted? Not very many I am afraid. I can ...but I am not too sure how many others can.

I think the ARRL directors were speaking very personally and I noted that some of the polls that they ran were not what I would consider fair polls. By that I mean they tended to press the retention of the code and in that area, the directors got the answer they wanted. You know as well as I do that you can construct a poll and get almost any answer you want. To get a purely non-biased poll is one of the most difficult things for poll writers to do. They did not do that in the various divisions. If you were to take a look at the individual divisions where the decisions were for or against, you would see I think that the directors polled their members in very much different ways.

W5YI - All of the large amateur organizations ...the packeteers (represented by TAPR), the satellite operators (represented by AMSAT), the long term operators (represented by QCWA), the testing community (represented by the VEC's) and others - supported code-free amateur radio down to the 30 MHz level. Why not the ARRL. Were there some political reasons?
W2HD - Yes, I think so. I think that the directors in those areas where there are very busy, heavily operated repeaters on two meters have a constituency that probably don't want to see those repeaters crowded any more. But we addressed that in our QCWA proposal. I recognized that was going to be question that would come about. I said there were many parts of the country where the repeaters are very sparsely used. Even in those areas where there might be a few heavily used repeaters, there are other frequencies where repeaters could be developed. The commission just recently increased the six meter repeater spectrum. There is space there for new repeaters.

When I look at the 220 and the 450 repeater list, I know that there is room up there, too, but I also know that is not the mainstream. That is not the place where amateur radio is going to talk to and interface with newcomers. If we are going to bring them on, we have stretch out our hand and say 'welcome aboard.' We have got to help them, otherwise they will grow like weeds in the desert. I used to put a voice operated tape recorder on repeaters every once in a while where I was curious as to what the actual usage was. Many, many repeater assignments are very lightly used.

W5YI - It seems that where there is 220 activity it is because 2 meters is filled.
W2HD - Yes, I think this is true and I am happy to see that. I hope that this does lead to the development of 220 repeaters to a greater extent.

W5YI - Do you think we will now see any activity at six meters.
W2HD - In those areas where you have [TV] channel 2, there is always that problem. When I lived in New York I only operated six meters when the band was wide open ...when channel 2 was being clobbered by long distance reception. I knew that I would cause television interference and I did not want to do that deliberately when I had other bands on which I could operate. However, down here [in Charlottesville, Virginia] there is no channel 2 and I hope that maybe six meter activity will be prompted. I would like to see us do it. There is lots of six meter propagation. Six meter repeaters would be very useful.

W5YI - Any final thoughts on no-code ...or telegraphy exemptions for the handicapped?
W2HD - I just hope that the radio amateurs will embrace the codeless license in much the same manner as we come to embrace the Novice. I recall when the Novice license first came into being and there was a lot of rejection. They were coming into amateur radio with practically nothing. You now look at what the Novice license has done for amateur radio ...it has been tremendous. I hope that we can look at this picture in ten to fifteen years and say that this no-code license was just as good a thing to do for the future of the hobby.

I can't speak too well for the handicapped code business because I think they have opened up a door there that is going to be very difficult for a VE to handle. They are have to take the doctor's word ...whatever it is. It seems to me that it takes something out of our hands completely and I am not so sure that there might not be instances of abuse. I am hoping that it will be very slight.

In the case of the codeless license, I am pleased with everything I have seen. I can't very well gripe when 90% or better of it is what we have written about ...and supported in our proposal.
(Telephone conversation: Saturday, Dec. 23, 1990.)